

Problems Faced by Private Sector Primary School Teachers in the Application of Pedagogical Skills

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Abstract

As pedagogy is the science of teaching, it requires considerable creativity for a teacher to attain a firm grasp on it. Only an expert teacher can use different tools and methodologies to enhance learning abilities of his/her students. For teachers, it becomes essential to utilize their full potentials and resources to keep teaching standards up to the mark. This study was designed to highlight problems faced by teachers in the application of creative teaching methodologies in their classrooms. Teachers teaching at primary level in different private schools of Karachi served as the research participants of the study. A total of fifty teachers were selected by using purposive sampling. For data collection, a structured questionnaire based on Likert Scale containing 32 items served as the instrument of the study. Findings revealed that almost all teachers use demonstration method with sparing use of technology.

Keywords: pedagogical skills, primary level, teaching standards, learning abilities.

Introduction

Pedagogy is the science of teaching. A teacher always tries to find

ways to perform effectively in the classroom. For the one who keeps exploring different teaching techniques to improve one's teaching, it requires a lot of effort to master strategies and methodologies to enhance students' learning. Pedagogical knowledge refers to teacher's knowledge about the basic teaching learning skills such as, teaching approaches, curricular design, evaluation techniques, and managerial issues. Operationally, pedagogical knowledge refers to awareness of four specific teaching areas namely; learner feedback, learner strategies, authentic material, and alternative assessment. This also includes teacher practices inside and outside the classroom such as lesson preparation, lesson delivery, adaptation of material, test preparation and marking, taking and giving learners feedback, and alternative assessment.

This study is related to the use of innovative methodology. There are various classroom factors which lead to the formation of societal perceptions toward teaching as a profession. Teachers can contribute substantially by bringing about innovations. This study considered four variables that could be measured as means of bringing about improvement in teaching methods and methodologies.

According to Karthik (2005), audio-visual aids and communication material, educational and instructional media and learning resources broadly speaking mean the same thing. Technology can be replaced with instruction, but the teacher cannot be replaced. Educational technology can be employed for training and retraining the teachers (Karthik (2005). Similarly, quality of education depends on the procedure and forms of instructions given to the students. A teacher can maximize students' academic engagement by adding factors like cognitive and behavior processing and organizational contextual to his/ her instructional methods (Mangla, 2005).

Assessing the quality of learning should always remain a regular feature of classroom teaching and learning. There are many ways that a teacher can adopt to assess progress, ranging from simple observations to the administering of standardized tests. For teachers, there should be justification for a method that they apply for assessing the students (Freeman & Lewis, 2004 & Perry, 2004). This study also tried to analyze the above mentioned features along with teachers' interpersonal skills and to gauge

the primary level private school teachers' awareness about their teaching skills and challenges in meeting the objectives.

The main objective of the study was to investigate problems faced by private primary school teachers in applying different pedagogical skills in their classrooms. Subsidiary objectives included determining the availability of technological facilities, application possibilities of learner centered teaching strategies, types of assessment techniques in use, and impact of interpersonal skills on effective teaching at primary school level (Jones, Selby & Sterling, 2001).

The hypothesis derived for the study was:

Teachers teaching primary classes in private sectors do not face problems in the application of pedagogical skills.

Methodology

The study was conducted in one of the cosmopolitan cities of Pakistan. The purpose of this study was to investigate problems faced by the teachers in the use of creative teaching methodologies in their classrooms.

Participants

Teachers teaching at primary level in different private schools served as the target population for the study. A total of 50 teachers were selected as the sample of the study by using purposive sampling.

Design

The design of the study was descriptive method. The method was used to study the nature of problems faced by the teachers teaching at primary level in different private sector schools. Demographic features like chronological age, gender, job expertise, service experience, and academic qualification of the teachers were investigated to measure any relationship with these variables.

Procedures

The pilot study used the questionnaire on ten teachers, which provided helpful insights to modify the questionnaire. The modified questionnaire was based on 32 items which were divided into four sections: technology, teaching strategies, interpersonal skills, and assessment. The questionnaire was distributed among the primary level teachers teaching in different private sector schools. A total of 50 teachers were selected for the study purpose by using the method of purposive sampling. The researchers distributed the questionnaires among the teachers by taking consent for the study. The teachers filled in the questionnaire and when they were returned, the researchers tele-marked the data and converted them into tabular form. The analysis of answers was done by using a percentage method.

Statistical analysis

A questionnaire comprising four sections was required to be answered by respondents: Technological Facilities (06= items); Teaching Strategies (17= items); Interpersonal Skills (03= items); and, Assessment (06= items). A five point Likert scale was used for all four sections. Tele-marking was done of the collected data and responses were tabulated by using a percentage method.

Results

Results of the questionnaire revealed that 100% of respondents were female, out of which 46% teacher's age group was between 31-35 years, 54% teachers had a master's degree, and 66% teachers did not have any professional qualification. Most teachers had 5 years or more experience in the field of teaching, 28% of teachers occasionally used computers facilities provided by schools, only 32% teachers' used networking facilities frequently, while most of the teachers used networking facilities occasionally or sometimes. The use of multimedia and projectors were not common; in general teaching most teachers did not use social media to discuss their teaching related problems and did not use online webinar, and only 6% teachers usually read the blogs and articles related

to teaching. Most teachers used direct method, question-answering method, demonstration method for effective teaching. Results indicated that the administration of the schools never arranged field trips for effective learning, use of teaching aids was not common among teachers, most teachers worked on ethical needs of the students, and large groups of teachers built a strong and healthy relationship with their students, almost all teachers gave assignments, projects, and topics to write essays to assess their students, a very large number of teachers took oral and objective based tests, and most of the teachers assessed the behavior of the students to analyze their understanding.

Discussion

Findings of the study revealed that most of the private sector primary level teachers do not have any professional qualification in teaching and due to this reason, they lacked effective teaching skills. Most of the school administration failed to provide technological facilities to their teachers and neither did they facilitate their teachers to gain any technological knowledge and assistance to improve their teaching (Bhattacharya, 2006; Chhaya, 2004 & Sharma, 2005). Results also showed that although most private sector primary level teachers use conventional teaching methods in their classrooms, they lacked innovations in teaching like use of teaching aids, brain storming, and field trips (Croft & Kumar, 2010). The study also revealed that many private school primary level teachers use different innovative assessment procedures to assess their student's understanding, but they do not assess application and synthesis of knowledge of their students (Cohen, Manion & Morison, 2007). Furthermore, results indicated that almost all primary level private school teachers were able to build strong and healthy relationships with their students.

Conclusion

It is concluded from the study that private school primary level teachers face problems in the application of pedagogical skills. As a reformation, it becomes essential for private school administration to provide training to their teachers. It is also important for teachers to gain

technological skills to widen their knowledge about their field and related domains. The school administration should provide incentives to those teachers who implement innovations in their teaching. This will help enhance their understanding about the scope of the field and prepare them for quality teaching in their contexts.

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